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MONTHLY REVIEW

AN INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST MAGAZINE

SPECIAL ISSUE

*COMMEMORATING THE CENTENARY
OF ENGELS' DEATH:*

VOL. 47

POSTURE MAKETH THE MAN

Stephen Jay Gould

THE PART PLAYED BY LA
TRANSITION FROM APE T

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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

The September 1987 issue of *MR* featured an article entitled "The Great Divide: Class Polarization in the 1980s" by Jerry Kloby, a sociology teacher at Rutgers. On the basis of recent studies by the congressional Joint Economic Committee and the Census Bureau, Kloby showed that both income and wealth inequality in the United States was on the increase and had already attained unprecedented levels. In 1987 this was news, though hardly surprising to anyone who had been following developments in Washington since the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980.

Today, nearly a decade later, the trend toward increasing inequality is no longer news. It is common knowledge, rarely mentioned by the media, taken for granted like inequality itself as a characteristic feature of the kind of society we live in. Liberals generally deplore it (a good example is Secretary of Labor Robert Reich), but their proposed remedies, if any, hardly touch the surface of the problem. Conservatives of course like it, but

(Continued on inside back cover)

THE PART PLAYED BY LABOR IN THE TRANSITION FROM APE TO MAN

by FRIEDRICH ENGELS

Labor is the source of all wealth, the economists assert. It is this, next to nature, which supplies it with the material it converts into wealth. But it is also infinitely more than this. It is the primary basic condition for all human existence, and this is to such an extent that, in a sense, we have to say that labor created man himself.

Many hundreds of thousands of years ago, during an epoch, not yet definitely determined, of that period of the earth's history which geologists call the Tertiary period, most likely toward the end of it, a specially highly developed of anthropoid apes lived somewhere in the tropical zone—probably on a great continent that has sunk to the bottom of the Indian Ocean. Darwin has given us an approximate description of these ancestors of ours. They were completely covered with hair, they had beards and pointed ears, and they lived in bands in the trees.

Almost certainly as an immediate consequence of their mode of life, for in climbing the hands fulfill quite different functions from the feet, these apes when moving on level ground began to drop the habit of using their hands and adopt a more and more erect posture in walking. This was *the decisive step in the transition from ape to man*.

All anthropoid apes of the present day can stand erect and

Monthly Review is reprinting this essay from the *Dialectic of Nature* in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the death of Friedrich Engels.

move about on their feet alone, but only in the case of need and in a very clumsy way. Their natural gait is in a half-erect posture and includes the use of hands. The majority rest the knuckles of the fist on the ground and, with legs drawn up, swing the body through their long arms, much as a cripple moves with the aid of crutches. In general, we can today still observe among the apes all the transition stages from walking on all fours to walking on two legs. But for none of them has the latter method become more than a makeshift.

For erect gait among our hairy ancestors to have become first the rule and in time a necessity presupposes that in the meantime, the hands became more and more devoted to other functions. Even among the apes there already prevails a certain separation of hands and feet. The former serve primarily for collecting and holding food, as already occurs in the use of forepaws among lower mammals. Many monkeys use their hands to build nests for themselves in the trees or even, like the chimpanzee, to construct roofs between branches for protection against the weather. With their hands, they seize hold of clubs to defend themselves against enemies, or bombard the later with fruits and stones. In captivity, they carry out with their hands a number of simple operations copied from human beings. But it is just here that one sees how great is the gulf between the undeveloped hand of even the most anthropoid of apes and the human hand that has been highly perfected by the labor of hundreds of thousands of years. The number and general arrangement of the bones and muscles are the same in both; but the hand of the lowest savage can perform hundreds of operations that no monkey's hand can imitate. No simian hand has ever fashioned even the crudest stone knife.

At first, therefore, the operation, for which our ancestors gradually learned to adapt their hands during the many thousands of years of transition from ape to man could only have been very simple. The lowest savages, even those in whom a regression to a more animal-like condition, with a simultaneous physical degeneration, can be assumed to have oc-

curred, are nevertheless far superior to these transitional beings. Before the first flint could be fashioned into a knife by human hands, a period of time must probably have elapsed in comparison with which the historical period known to us appears insignificant. But the decisive step was taken: the hand became free and could henceforth attain even greater dexterity and skill, and the greater flexibility thus acquired was inherited and increased from generation to generation. Thus the hand is not only the organ of labor, *it is also the product of labor*. Only by labor, by adaptation to ever new operations, by inheritance of the resulting special development of muscles, ligaments, and over longer periods of time, bones as well, and the ever renewed employment of these inherited improvements in new, more and more complicated operations, has the human hand attained the high degree of perfection that has enabled it to conjure into being the pictures of Raphael, the statues of Thorwaldsen, the music of Paganini.

But the hand did not exist by itself. It was only one member of an entire, highly complex organism. And what benefited the hand, benefited the whole body it served; and this in two ways.

In the first place, the body benefited in consequence of the law of correlation of growth, as Darwin called it. According to this law, particular forms of the individual parts of an organic being are always bound up with certain forms of other parts that apparently have no connection to the first. Thus all animals that have red blood cells without a cell nucleus, and in which the neck is connected to the first vertebra by means of a double articulation (condyles), also without exception possess lacteal glands for suckling their young. Similarly, cloven hooves in mammals are regularly associated with the possession of a multiple stomach for rumination. Changes in certain forms involve changes in the form of other parts of the body, although we cannot explain this connection. Perfectly white cats with blue eyes are always, or almost always, deaf. The gradual perfecting of the human hand, and the development that keeps pace with it in the adaptation of the feet for erect

gait, has undoubtably also, by virtue of such correlation, reacted on other parts of the organism. However, this action has as yet been much too little investigated for us to be able to do more here than to state the fact in general terms.

Much more important is the direct, demonstrable reaction of the development of the hand on the rest of the organism. As already said, our simian ancestors were gregarious; it is obviously impossible to seek the derivation of man, the most social of all animals, from the nongregarious immediate ancestors. The mastery over nature, which begins with the development of the hand, with labor, widened man's horizon at every new advance. He was continually discovering *new, hitherto unknown, properties of natural objects*. On the other hand, the development of labor necessarily helped to bring the members of society closer together by multiplying the cases of mutual support, joint activity, and by making clear the advantage of this joint activity to each individual. In short, men in the making arrived at the point where *they had something to say* to one another. The need led to the creation of its organ; the undeveloped larynx of the ape was slowly but surely transformed by means of gradually increased modulation, and the organs of the mouth gradually learned to pronounce one articulate letter after another.

Comparison with animals proves that this explanation of the origin of language from and in the process of labor is the only correct one. The little that even the most highly developed animals need to communicate to one another can be communicated even without the aid of articulate speech. In a state of nature, no animal feels its inability to speak or to understand human language. It is quite different when it has been tamed by man. The dog and the horse, by association with man, have developed such a good ear for articulate speech that they easily learn to understand any language within the range of their circle of ideas. Moreover, they have acquired the capacity for feelings, such as affection for man, gratitude, etc., which were previously foreign to them. Anyone who has had much to do with such animals will hardly be able

to escape the conviction that there are plenty of cases where they now feel their inability to speak is a defect, although, unfortunately, it can no longer be remedied owing to their vocal organs being specialized in a definite direction. However, where the organ exists, within certain limits even this inability disappears. The buccal organs of birds are of course radically different from those of man, yet birds are the only animals that can learn to speak; and it is the bird with the most hideous voice, the parrot, that speaks the best of them all. It need not be objected that the parrot does not understand what it says. It is true that for the sheer pleasure of talking and associating with human beings, the parrot will chatter for hours at a time, continuing to repeat its whole vocabulary. But within the limits of its circle of ideas, it can also begin to understand what it is saying. Teach a parrot swear words in such a way that it gets an idea of their significance (one of the great amusements of sailors returning from the tropics); on teasing it one will soon discover that it knows how to use swear words just as correctly as a Berlin costermonger. Similarly with begging for tidbits.

First comes labor, after it, and then side by side with it, articulate speech—these were the two most essential stimuli under the influence of which the brain of the ape gradually changed into that of a man, which for all its similarity to the former is far larger and more perfect. Hand and hand with the development of the brain went the development of its most immediate instruments—sense organs. Just as the gradual development of speech is inevitably accompanied by the a corresponding refinement of the organ of hearing, so the development of the brain as a whole is accompanied by the refinement of all the senses. The eagle sees much farther than man, but the human eye sees considerably more in things than does the eye of the eagle. The dog has a far keener sense of smell than man, but it does not distinguish a hundredth part of the odors that for man are definite features of different things. And the sense of touch, which the ape hardly possesses in its crudest initial form, has been developed side by side with

the development of the human hand itself, through the medium of labor.

The reactions on labor and speech of the development of the brain and its attendant senses, of the increasing clarity of consciousness, power of abstraction and of judgment, gave an ever renewed impulse to the further development of labor and speech. This further development did not reach its conclusion when man finally became distinct from the monkey, but, on the whole, continued to make powerful progress, varying in degree and direction among different peoples, and at different times, and here and there even interrupted by a local or temporary regression. This further development has been strongly urged forward, on the one hand, and has been guided along more definite directions, on the other hand, owing to a new element which came into play with the appearance of fully fledged man, viz. *society*.

Hundreds of thousands of years—of no greater significance in the history of the earth than one second in the history of man—certainly elapsed before human society arose out of a band of tree-climbing monkeys. Yet it finally did appear. And what do we find once more as the characteristic difference between the band of monkeys and human society? *Labor*. The ape horde was satisfied to browse over the feeding area determined for it by geographical conditions or the degree of resistance of neighboring hordes; it undertook migrations and struggles to win new feeding grounds, but it was incapable of extracting from the area which supplied it with food more than the region offered in its natural state, except, perhaps, that the horde unconsciously fertilized the soil with its own excrements. As soon as all possible feeding grounds were occupied, further increase of the monkey population could not occur; the number of animals could at best remain stationary. But all animals waste a great deal of food, and, in addition, destroy in embryo the next generation of the food supply. Unlike the hunter, the wolf does not spare the doe which would provide it with young deer the next year; the goats in Greece, which graze down the young bushes before

they can grow up, have eaten bare all the mountains of the country. This “predatory economy” of animals plays an important part in the gradual transformation of species by forcing them to adapt themselves to other than the usual food, thanks to which their blood acquires a different chemical composition and the whole physical constitution gradually alters, while species that were once established die out. There is no doubt that this predatory economy had powerfully contributed to the gradual evolution of our ancestors into men. In a race of apes that far surpassed all others in intelligence and adaptability, this predatory economy could not help leading to a continual increase in the number of plants used for food and to the devouring of more and more edible parts of those plants. In short, it led to the food becoming more and more varied, hence also the substances entering the body, the chemical premises for the transition to man. But all that was not yet about labor in the proper sense of the word. The labor process begins with the making of tools. And what are the most ancient tools we find—the most ancient judging by the heirlooms of prehistoric man that have been discovered, and by the mode of life of the earliest historical peoples and of the most primitive contemporary savages? They are hunting and fishing implements, the former at the same time serving as weapons. But hunting and fishing presuppose the transition from an exclusively vegetable diet to the concomitant use of meat, and this is an important step in the transition from ape to man. A *meat diet* contains in almost ready state the most essential ingredients required by the organism for its metabolism. It shortened the time required, not only for digestion, but also for other vegetative bodily processes corresponding to those of plant life, and thus gained further time, material, and energy for the active manifestation of animal life in the proper sense of the word. And the further that man in the making became removed from the plant kingdom, the higher he rose over the animals. Just as becoming accustomed to a plant diet side by side with meat has converted wild cats and dogs into the servants of man, so has adaptation of a flesh diet,

side by side with a vegetable diet, considerably contributed to giving bodily strength and independence to man in the making. The most essential effect, however, of a flesh diet was on the brain, which now received a richer flow of the materials necessary for its nourishment and development, and which therefore could become more rapidly and perfectly developed from generation to generation. With all respect to vegetarians, it has to be recognized that man did not come into existence without a flesh diet, and if the latter, among all peoples known to us, has led to cannibalism at some time or another (the forefathers of the Berliners, the Weletabians or Wilzians, used to eat their parents as late as the tenth century), that is of no consequence today.

A meat diet led to new advances of a decisive importance: to the mastery of fire and the taming of animals. The first still further shortened the digestive process, as it provided the mouth with food already as it were semi-digested; the second made meat more copious by opening up a new, more regular source of supply in addition to hunting, and moreover provided in milk and its products, a new article of food at least as valuable as meat in its composition. Thus, both these advances became directly new means of emancipation for man. It would lead us too far to dwell here in detail on their indirect effects, notwithstanding the great importance they have had for the development of man and society.

Just as man learned to consume everything edible, he also learned to live in any climate. He spread over the whole of the habitable world, being the only animal that by its very nature has the power to do so. The other animals that have been accustomed to all climates—domestic animals and vermin—did not become so independently, but only in the wake of man. And the transition from the uniformly hot climate of the original home of man to colder regions, where the year is divided into summer and winter, created new requirements: shelter and clothing as protection against the cold and damp, new spheres for labor and hence new forms of activity, which further and further separated man from the animal.

By the cooperation of hands, organs of speech, and brain, not only in each individual, but also in society, human beings became capable of executing more and more complicated operations, and of setting themselves, and achieving, higher and higher aims. With each generation, labor itself became different, more perfect, more diversified. Agriculture was added to hunting and cattle-breeding, then spinning, weaving, metalworking, pottery, and navigation. Along with trade and industry, there appeared finally art and science. From tribes there developed nations and states. Law and politics arose, and with them, the fantastic reflection of human things in the human mind: religion. In the face of all these creations: which appeared in the first place to be products of the mind, and which seemed to dominate human society, the more modest productions of the working hand retreated into the background, the more so since the mind that plans the labor process already at the very early stage of development of society (e.g. already in the simple family), was able to have the labor that had been planned carried out by other hands than its own. All merit for the swift advance of civilization was ascribed to the mind, to the development and activity of the brain. Men became accustomed to explain their actions from their thoughts, instead of from their needs—which in any case are reflected and come to consciousness in the mind—and so there arose in the course of time that idealistic outlook on the world which, especially since the decline of the ancient world, has dominated men's minds. It still rules them to such a degree that even the most materialistic scientists of the Darwinian school are still unable to form any clear idea of the origin of man, because under this ideological influence they do not recognize the part that has been played therein by labor.

Animals, as already indicated, change external nature by their activities just as man does, if not to the same extent, and these changes made by them in their environment, as we have seen, in turn react upon and change their originators. For in nature, nothing takes place in isolation. Everything affects

every other thing and vice versa, and it is usually because this many-sided motion and interaction is forgotten that our natural scientists are prevented from clearly seeing the simplest things. We have seen how goats have prevented the regeneration of forest in Greece; on the island of St. Helena, goats and pigs brought by the first arrivals have succeeded in exterminating almost completely the old vegetation of the island, and so have prepared the soil for the spreading of plants brought by later sailors and colonists. But if animals exert a lasting effect on their environment, it happens unintentionally, and, as far as the animals themselves are concerned, it is an accident. The further men become removed from animals, however, the more their effect on nature assumes the characteristic of a premeditated, planned action directed toward definite ends known in advance. The animal destroys the vegetation of a locality without realizing what it is doing. Man destroys it in order to sow field crops on the soil thus released, or to plant trees or vines which he knows will yield many times that amount sown. He transfers useful plants and animals from one country to another and thus changes the flora and fauna of whole continents. More than this. Under artificial cultivation, both plants and animals are so changed by the hand of man that they become unrecognizable. The wild plants from which our grain varieties originated are still being sought in vain. The question of the animal from which our dogs are descended, the dogs themselves being so different from one another, or our equally numerous breeds of horses, is still under dispute.

In any case, of course, we have no intention of disputing the ability of animals to act in a planned and premeditated fashion. On the contrary, a planned mode of action exists in embryo wherever protoplasm, living protein, exists and reacts, i.e., carries out definite, even if extremely simple, movements as a result of definite external stimuli. Such reaction takes place even when there is yet no cell at all, far less a nerve cell. The manner in which insectivorous plants capture their prey appears likewise in a certain respect as a planned action,

although performed quite unconsciously. In animals, the capacity for conscious, planned action develops side by side with the development of the nervous system and among mammals it attains quite a high level. While fox-hunting in England, one can daily observe how unerringly the fox knows how to make use of its excellent knowledge of the locality in order to escape from its pursuers, and how well it knows and turns to account all favorable features of the ground that cause the scent to be interrupted. Among our domestic animals, more highly developed, thanks to association with man, every day one can note acts of cunning on exactly the same level as those of children. For, just as the developmental history of the human embryo in the mother's womb is only an abbreviated repetition of the history, extending over millions of years, of the bodily evolution of our animal ancestors, beginning with the worm, so the mental development of the human child is only a still more abbreviated repetition of the intellectual development of these same ancestors, at least of the later ones. But all the planned action of all animals has never resulted in impressing the stamp of their will upon nature. For that, man was required.

In short, the animal merely *uses* external nature, and brings about changes in it simply by his presence; man by his changes makes it serve his ends, *masters* it. This is the final, essential distinction between man and other animals, and once again it is labor that brings about this distinction.

Let us not, however, flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human conquest over nature. For each such conquest takes its revenge on us. Each of them, it is true, has in the first place the consequence on which we counted, but in the second and third places it has quite different, unforeseen effects, which only too often cancel out the first. The people who, in Mesopotamia, Greece, Asia Minor, and elsewhere, destroyed the forests to obtain cultivable land, never dreamed that they were laying the basis for the present devastated condition of these countries, by removing along with the forests the collecting centers and reservoirs of moisture.

When, on the southern slopes of the mountains, the Italians of the Alps used up the pine forests so carefully cherished on the northern slopes, they had no inkling that by doing so they were cutting at the roots of the dairy industry in their region; they had still less inkling that they were thereby depriving their mountain springs of water for the greater part of the year, with the effect that these would be able to pour still more furious flood torrents on the plains during the rainy seasons. Those who spread the potato in Europe were not aware that they were at the same time spreading the disease scrofula. Thus at every step we are reminded that we by no means rule over nature like a conqueror over a foreign people, like someone standing outside of nature—but that we, with flesh, blood, and brain, belong to nature, and exist in its midst, and that all our mastery of it consists in the fact that we have the advantage over all other beings of being able to know and correctly apply its laws.

And, in fact, with every day that passes we are learning to understand these laws more correctly, and getting to know both the more immediate and the more remote consequences of our interference with the traditional course of nature. In particular, after the mighty advances of natural science in the present century, we are more and more getting to know, and hence to control, even the more remote natural consequences at least of our more ordinary productive activities. But the more this happens, the more men will not only feel, but also know, their unity with nature, and thus more impossible will become the senseless and antinatural idea of a contradiction between mind and matter, man and nature, soul and body, such as arose in Europe after the decline of classic antiquity and which obtained its highest elaboration in Christianity.

But if it has already required the labor of thousands of years for us to learn to some extent to calculate the more remote natural consequences of our actions aiming at production, it has been still more difficult in regard to the more remote *social* consequences of these actions. We mentioned the potato and the resulting spread of scrofula. But what is

scrofula in comparison with the effect on the living conditions of the masses of people in whole countries resulting from the workers being reduced to a potato diet, or in comparison with the famine which overtook Ireland in 1847 in consequence of the potato disease, and which put under the earth a million Irishmen, nourished solely or almost exclusively on potatoes, and forced the immigration overseas of nearly two million more? When the Arabs learned to distill alcohol, it never entered their heads that by doing so they were creating one of the chief weapons for the annihilation of the original inhabitants of the still undiscovered American continent. And when afterward Columbus discovered America, he did not know that by doing so he was giving life to slavery, which in Europe had long ago been done away with, and laying the basis for the Negro slave traffic. The men who in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries labored to create the steam engine had no idea that they were preparing the instrument which more than any other way was to revolutionize social conditions throughout the world. Especially in Europe, by concentrating wealth in the hands of a minority, the huge majority being rendered propertyless, this instrument was destined at first to give social and political domination to the bourgeoisie, and then, however, to give rise to a class struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat which can end only in the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the abolition of all class contradictions. But even in this sphere, by long and often cruel experience and by collecting and analyzing the historical material, we are gradually learning to get a clear view of our productive activity, and so the possibility is afforded us of mastering and controlling these effects as well.

To carry out this control requires something more than mere knowledge. It requires complete revolution in our hitherto existing mode of production, and with it of our whole contemporary social order.

All hitherto existing modes of production have aimed merely at achieving the most immediately and directly useful effect of labor. The further consequences, which only appear

later on and become effective through gradual repetition and accumulation, were totally neglected. Primitive communal ownership of land corresponded on the one hand, to a level of development of human beings in which their horizon was restricted in general by what lay immediately at hand, and presupposed, on the other hand, a certain surplus of available land, allowing a certain latitude for correcting any possible bad results of this primitive forest type of economy. When this surplus land was exhausted, communal ownership also declined. All higher forms of production, however, proceeded in their development to the division of the population into different classes and thereby the contradiction of ruling and oppressed classes. But thanks to this, the interest of the ruling class became the driving factor of production, in so far as the latter was not restricted to the barest means of subsistence of the oppressed people. This has been carried through most completely in the capitalist mode of production prevailing today in Western Europe. The individual capitalists, who dominate production and exchange, are able to concern themselves only with the most immediate useful effects of their actions. Indeed, even this useful effect—in as much as it is a question of the usefulness of the commodity that is produced or exchanged—retreats right into the background, and the sole incentive becomes the profit gained on selling.

The social science of the bourgeoisie, classical political economy, is predominantly occupied only with the directly intended social effects of human actions connected with production and exchange. This fully corresponds to the social organization of which it is the theoretical expression. When individual capitalists are engaged in profit and exchange for the sake of immediate profit, only the nearest, most immediate results can be taken into account in the first place. When an individual manufacturer or merchant sells a manufactured or purchased commodity with only the usual small profit, he is satisfied, and he is not concerned as to what becomes of the commodity afterward or who are its purchasers. The same thing applies to the natural effects of the same actions. What

did the Spanish planters in Cuba, who burned the forests on the slopes of the mountains and obtained from the ashes sufficient fertilizer for one generation of very highly profitable coffee, care that the tropical rainfall afterward washed away the now unprotected upper stratum of soil, leaving behind only bare rock? In relation to nature, as to society, the present mode of production is predominantly concerned only about the first, tangible success; and then surprise is expressed that the more remote effects of actions directed to this end turn out to be of a quite different, mainly even of quite an opposite, character; that the harmony of demand and supply becomes transformed into their polar opposites, as shown by the course of each ten years' industrial cycle, and of which even Germany has experienced a little preliminary in the "crash"; that private ownership based on individual labor necessarily develops into the propertylessness of the workers, while all wealth becomes more and more concentrated in the hands of the nonworkers; that.... [The manuscript here breaks off abruptly.]

Visit Vietnam with Monthly Review

As not enough people were able to commit to the Winter 1995 trip, we are able, with the cooperation of the Vietnamese Office of Tourism, to offer the same trip leaving April 27 and returning May 9, 1996. This will put the group in Hanoi for May Day which should be exciting. Please let us know if the change in dates works out for you and if you are still interested. With the recent change in U.S. policy it would seem a wonderful time to go!

POSTURE MAKETH THE MAN

by STEPHEN JAY GOULD

No event did more to establish the fame and prestige of the Museum of Natural History than the Gobi Desert expeditions of the 1920s. The discoveries, including the first dinosaur egg, were exciting and abundant, and fit the sheer romance of Hollywood's most heroic mold. It is still hard to find a better adventure story than Roy Chapman Andrews's book (with its chauvinistic title:) *The New Conquest of Central Asia*. Nonetheless, the expeditions utterly failed to achieve their stated purpose: to find in Central Asia the ancestors of man. And they failed for the most elementary of reasons—we evolved in Africa, as Darwin surmised fifty years earlier.

Our African ancestors (or at least our nearest cousins) were discovered in cave deposits during the 1920s. But these australopithecines failed to fit preconceived notions of what a “missing link” should look like, and many scientists refused to accept them as bona fide members of our lineage. Most anthropologists had imagined a fairly harmonious transformation from ape to human, propelled by increasing intelligence. A missing link should be intermediate in both body and brain—Alley Oop or the old (and false) representations of stoop-shouldered Neanderthals. But the australopithecines refused to conform. To be sure, their brains were bigger than those of any ape with comparable body size, but not much bigger. Most of our evolutionary increase in brain size occurred after we reached the australopith-

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ecine level. Yet these small-brained australopithecines walked as erect as you or I. How could this be? If our evolution was propelled by an enlarging brain, how could upright posture—another “hall-mark of hominization,” not just an incidental feature—originate first? In a 1963 essay, George Gaylord Simpson used this dilemma to illustrate

the sometimes spectacular failure to predict discoveries even when there is a sound basis for such prediction. An evolutionary example is the failure to predict discovery of a “missing link,” now known [*Australopithecus*], that was upright and tool-making but had the physiognomy and cranial capacity of an ape.

We must ascribe this “spectacular failure” primarily to a subtle prejudice that led to the following invalid extrapolation: We dominate other animals by brainpower (and little else); therefore, an increasing brain must have propelled our own evolution at all stages. The tradition for subordinating the upright posture to an enlarging brain can be traced throughout the history of anthropology. Karl Ernst von Baer, the greatest embryologist of the nineteenth century (and second only to Darwin in my personal pantheon of scientific heros) wrote in 1828: “Upright posture is only the consequence of the higher development of the brain . . . all differences between men and other animals depend upon construction of the brain.” One hundred years later, the English anthropologist G.E. Smith wrote: “It was not the adoption of the erect attitude or the invention of articulate language that made man from ape, but the gradual perfecting of the brain and the slow building of the mental structure, of which erectness of carriage and speech are some of the incidental manifestations.”

Against this chorus of emphasis on the brain, a very few scientists upheld the primacy of upright posture. Sigmund Freud based much of his highly idiosyncratic theory of the origin of civilization upon it. Beginning in his letters to Wilhelm Fliess in the 1890s and culminating in his 1930 essay on *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud argued that our assumption of upright posture has reoriented our primary sensation from smell to vision. This devaluation of the olfaction shifted the object of sexual stimulation in males from the cyclic odors of estrus to the

continual visibility of female genitalia. Continual desire in males leads to continual receptivity in females. Most mammals copulate only around periods of ovulation; humans are sexually active at all times (a favorite theme of writers on sexuality). Continual sexuality has centered the human family and made civilization possible; animals with strongly cyclic copulation have no impetus for stable family structure. "The fateful process of civilization," Freud concludes, "would have set in with man's adoption of an erect posture."

Although Freud's ideas gained no following among anthropologists, another minor tradition did arise to stress the primacy of upright posture. (It is, by the way, the argument we tend to accept today in explaining the morphology of australopithecines and the path of human evolution.) The brain cannot begin to increase in a vacuum. A primary impetus must be provided by an altered mode of life that would place a strong, selective premium upon intelligence. Upright posture frees the hands from locomotion and for manipulation (literally, from manus="hands"). For the first time, tools and weapons can be fashioned and used with ease. Increased intelligence is largely a response to the enormous potential in free hands for manufacture—again, literally. (Needless to say, no anthropologist has ever been so naive to argue that the brain and posture are completely independent in evolution, that one reached its full human status before the other began to change at all. We are dealing with interaction and mutual reinforcement. Nevertheless, our early evolution did involve a more rapid change in posture than in brain size; complete freeing of our hands for using tools preceded most of the evolutionary enlargement of our brain.)

In another proof that sobriety does not make right, von Baer's mystical and oracular colleague Lorenz Oken hit upon the "correct" argument in 1890, while von Baer was led astray a few years later. "Man by the upright walk obtains his character," writes Oken, "the hands become free and can achieve all other offices. . . . With the freedom of the body has been granted also the freedom of the mind." But the champion of the upright

posture during the nineteenth century was Darwin's German bulldog Ernst Haeckel. Without a scrap of direct evidence, Haeckel reconstructed our ancestor and even gave it a scientific name. (*Pithecanthropus*, by the way, is probably the only scientific name given to an animal before it was discovered. When Du Bois discovered Java-man in the 1890s, he adopted Haeckel's generic name but he gave it the new specific designation *Pithecanthropus erectus*. We now usually include this creature in our own genus as *Homo erectus*.)

But why, despite Haeckel's demurral, did the idea of cerebral primacy become so strongly entrenched? One thing is sure; it had nothing to do with direct evidence—for there was none for any position. With the exception of Neanderthal (a geographic variant of our own species, according to most anthropologists), no human fossils were discovered until the closing years of the nineteenth century, long after the dogma of cerebral primacy was established. But the debates based on no evidence are among the most revealing in the history of science, for in the absence of factual constraints, the cultural biases that affect all thought (and which scientists try so assiduously to deny) lie nakedly exposed.

Indeed, the nineteenth century produced a brilliant exposé from a source that will no doubt surprise most readers—Friedrich Engels. (A bit of reflection should diminish surprise. Engels had a keen interest in the natural sciences and sought to base his general philosophy of the dialectic of materialism upon a “positive” foundation. He did not live to complete his *Dialectic of Nature*, but he included long commentaries on science in such treatises as the *Anti-Duhring*.) In 1876, Engels wrote an essay entitled, “The Part Played by Labor in the Transition from Ape to Man.” It was published posthumously in 1896 and, unfortunately, had no visible impact upon Western science.

Engels considers three essential features of human evolution: speech, a large brain, and upright posture. He argues that the first step must have been descent from the trees, with subsequent evolution to upright posture by our ground-dwelling ancestors. “These apes when moving on level ground began to drop the habit

of using their hands and to adopt a more and more erect gait. This was a decisive step in the transition from ape to man." Upright posture freed the hand for using tools (labor, in Engel's terminology); increased intelligence and speech came later.

Thus the hand is not only the organ of labor, it is also the product of labor. Only by labor, by adaptation to ever new operations . . . by the ever-renewed employment of these inherited improvements in new, more and more complicated operations, has the human hand attained the high degree of perfection that has enabled it to conjure into being the pictures of Raphael, the statues of Thorwaldsen, the music of Paganini.

Engels presents his conclusions as though they followed deductively from the premise of his materialist philosophy, but I am confident that he cribbed them from Haeckel. The two formulations are almost identical, and Engels cites the relevant pages of Haeckel's work for other purposes in an earlier essay written in 1874. But no matter. The importance of Engel's essay lies not in its substantive conclusions, but in its trenchant political analysis of why Western science was so hung up on the a priori assertion of cerebral primacy.

As humans learned to master their material surroundings, Engels argues, other skills were added to primitive hunting—agriculture, spinning, pottery, navigation, arts and sciences, law and politics, and finally, "the fantastic reflection of human things in the human mind: religion." As wealth accumulated, small groups of men seized power and forced others to work for them. Labor, the source of all wealth and the primary impetus for human evolution, assumed the same low status of those who labored for the rulers. Since rulers governed by their will (that is, by feats of mind), actions of the brain appeared to have a motive power of their own. The profession of philosophy followed no unsullied ideal of truth. Philosophers relied on state religious patronage. Even if Plato did not consciously conspire to bolster the privileges of rulers with a supposed abstract philosophy, his own class encouraged an emphasis on thought as primary, dominating, and all together more important than the labor it supervised. This idealistic tradition dominated philosophy right down through Darwin's day. Its influence was so subtle and pervasive that even scientific but apolitical

materialists like Darwin fell under its sway. A bias must be recognized before it is challenged. Cerebral primacy seemed so obvious and natural that it was accepted as given, rather than recognized as a deep-seated social prejudice related to the class position of the professional thinkers and their patrons. Engels writes:

All merit for the swift advance of civilization was ascribed to the mind, the development and activity of the brain. Men became accustomed to explain their actions from their thoughts, instead of from their need. . . . And so there arose in the course of time that idealistic outlook on the world which, especially since the downfall of the ancient world, has dominated men's minds. It still rules them to such a degree that even the most materialistic natural scientists of the Darwinian school are still unable to form any clear idea of the origin of man, because under that ideological influence they do not recognize the part that is played therein by labor.

The importance of Engel's essay does not lie in the happy result that *Australopithecus* confirmed a specific theory posed by him—via Haeckel—but rather in his perceptive analysis of the political role of science and of the social biases that must affect all thought.

Indeed, Engel's theme of separation of the head and hand has done much to set and limit the course of science throughout history. Academic science, in particular, has been constrained by an idea of "pure" research, which in former days barred a scientist from extensive experimentation and empirical testing. Ancient Greek science labored under the restriction that patrician thinkers could not perform the manual work of plebeian artists. Medieval barber-surgeons who had to deal with battlefield casualties did more to advance the practice of medicine than academic physicians who rarely examined patients and who based their treatment on a knowledge of Galen and other learned texts. Even today, "pure" researchers tend to disparage the practical, and terms such as "aggie school" and "cow college" are heard with distressing frequency in academic circles. If we took Engel's message to heart and recognized our belief in the inherent superiority of pure research for what it is—namely a social prejudice—then we might forge among scientists the union between theory and practice that a world teetering dangerously near the brink so desperately needs.

ECOLOGY AND HUMAN FREEDOM

by JOHN BELLAMY FOSTER

We live at a time when it is reasonable to speak of the possibility of complete ecological destruction, in virtually the same sense that critics of nuclear armaments have often referred to the possibility of complete nuclear destruction. Both human society and the survival of the planet as we know it are now at risk.

Social action to combat this peril, however, has been agonizingly slow. The task of saving the earth is viewed, more often than not, as a costly burden, one which society is willing to support only in very limited ways at present, despite growing evidence of global ecological decline.

To understand why this is so it is necessary, I think, to turn to the dominant conception of human freedom. For centuries our society has seen freedom as a mechanical outgrowth of the technological domination of nature, and of a social arrangement in which each individual is encouraged to pursue his or her own self-interest with no consideration of the larger natural or social repercussions. Environmental protection, it is feared, would set limits both on the freedom of human beings to exploit the earth's resources, and on the freedom of individuals to pursue their own immediate material gain. It raises issues of the quality of life that transcend the quantitative ways in which we have come to judge human

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progress and freedom. It therefore threatens the very fabric of the possessive-individualist society in which we live.

Our present social order is entrapped in a mechanistic view of human freedom, and of the human relation to nature, that is directly at odds with ecological imperatives. This mechanistic emphasis in our culture dates back to the emergence of the modern scientific world-view, which arose along with the capitalist world economy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. "The modern view," the great physicist David Bohm has argued,

has been that of mechanism. The universe was compared to a gigantic machine, like a clockwork, and later to a structure of atoms. This outlook has gone on to regard the human being as a machine and is linked to the development of artificial intelligence. Thus, Descartes said that everything was a machine—all animals, the body, etc.

Although highly productive in terms of technological advance, this way of seeing the world has had fateful consequences. "Values," Bohm observes,

have significance behind them. . . . If the universe signifies mechanism and the values implicit therein, the individuals must fend for themselves. With mechanism, individuals are separate and have to take care of themselves first. We are all pushing against each other and everyone is trying to win. The significance of wholeness is that everything is related internally to everything else, and therefore, in the long run, it has no meaning for people to ignore the needs of others. Similarly, if we regard the world as made up of a lot of little bits, we will try to exploit each bit and we will end up by destroying the planet. At present, we do not adequately realize that we are one whole with the planet and that our whole being and substance comes out of it.¹

Today there is a growing awareness of the ecological threat posed by the prevailing mechanistic world-view and by the idea of the domination of nature that is part of it. Discoveries in such sciences as physics and ecology have undermined Newtonian mechanics, which has not yet however been replaced by any other equivalent world-view. From this has

arisen the hope among many that a less mechanistic scientific outlook (some would say an antiscientific outlook) will eventually provide the answers to the environmental problem.

Yet I think it is essential to recognize that it is not science (that is, the physical and natural sciences) but economics that is the mainspring of the mechanistic outlook that still characterizes our culture. An unwillingness to understand that it is irrational “for individuals to ignore the needs of others” and that the world is not “made up of a lot of little bits” is central to the ruling concept of freedom as free-market individualism.

Indeed, if we were to look for a form of contemporary thought that is wedded to mechanistic and reductionist assumptions with regard to human freedom and nature, we could not do better than to turn to economics. The idea of *homo economicus* is one of atomized, solitary individuals each competing for scarce resources. “The language of physics,” as social ecologist Murray Bookchin tells us,

is appropriate here: society is reduced to a mechanical Brownian movement of molecules, each bouncing against each other in the course of exchanging ‘goods and services.’ There appears to be no social dimension and no development of relations in the traditional sense other than quantitative ones.

Labor and land are viewed as commodities. People are reduced to being producers and consumers. The desire for goods is said to be insatiable. Freedom is narrowed down to the right to choose between competing alternatives. Progress, in this conception, occurs through the increased division of labor and through what has often been called the “conquest,” but might better be termed the “division,” of nature. From this, we are told, the optimal social results for humanity emerge, by means of the invisible hand of the free market.²

The fragmentation of reality associated with economic life is often attributed to innate characteristics of human beings themselves, who are seen as utility-seeking profit-maximizers whose natural propensity is to “truck, barter, and trade.” According to Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, the leading representative of ecological economics,

the fiction of *homo economicus* . . . strips man's behavior of every cultural propensity, which is tantamount to saying that in his economic life man acts mechanically. . . . However, the mechanistic sin of economic science is much deeper than this criticism implies. . . . The whole truth is that economics, in the way this discipline is generally professed, is mechanistic in the same strong sense in which we generally believe only Classical mechanics to be.³

Classical mechanics places little or no importance on qualitative states. It "knows only locomotion, and locomotion is both reversible and qualityless." Modern neoclassical economics was deliberately designed by its founders as a purely mechanical science in this crude sense. These founders "succeeded so well with their grand plan," Georgescu-Roegen continues,

that the conception of the economic process as a mechanical analogue has ever since dominated economic thought completely. In this representation, the economic process neither induces any qualitative change nor is affected by the qualitative change of the environment into which it is anchored. It is an isolated, self-contained and ahistorical process—a circular flow between production and consumption with no outlets and no inlets, as the elementary textbooks depict it. Economists do speak occasionally of natural resources. Yet the fact remains that, search as one may, in none of the numerous economic models in existence is there a variable standing for nature's perennial contribution.⁴

The extreme version of mechanism that one finds within contemporary mainstream economics is apparent in its complete failure to incorporate as basic a phenomenon as entropy into its understanding of the process of production and reproduction. As a result, economics is incapable of making even the first few steps toward understanding nature's changing qualitative states, upon which the economic world ultimately depends.

This failure of mainstream economic thought to evolve beyond a crude mechanism must ultimately be traced back to the socioeconomic conditions that it reflects. The central institution of social control in the modern world is that of the

market. Individuals in our society therefore are seen primarily in terms of their market roles; and the market itself emerges as the dominant so-called “natural” force in society—one that is said to be beyond human control in the sense that it is self-regulating. As the economic anthropologist Karl Polanyi wrote,

A market economy is an economic system controlled, regulated, and directed by markets alone; order in the production of and distribution of goods is entrusted to this self-regulating mechanism. An economy of this kind derives from the expectation that human beings behave in such a way as to achieve maximum money gains.

At best, human beings are relegated by our society to the state of being what the sociologist C. Wright Mills called “cheerful robots.”⁵

In this institutional order, production takes the form of commodities produced for sale on the market. The purely quantitative goal that governs production is increased profits. This occurs by means of competition, investment, and increasing productivity. Economic growth is thus inherent to the system. The proceeds of this growth are divided unevenly among classes of individuals, depending on their relation to production. An increase in share of wealth of a relatively small number of owners and managers is accompanied by the growth of relative poverty among the larger global population. Nature, meanwhile, is exploited absolutely, by a system that accords little or no direct value to natural reproduction. “In the grip of a system that breaks everything down into commodity form,” one environmentalist recently commented, “the earth is violated. The living planet is dismembered, as land becomes real estate, forests become lumber, oceans become fisheries and sinks.”⁶

Yet so central has the market mechanism become within our culture that the dominant perspective on the planetary ecological crisis requires that we accept the notion that a further extension of market relations offers the technical answer to all of our environmental problems. We are frequently told that a reconciliation between economy and environment can be achieved without altering the main features of the economic

treadmill on which we are all placed. Profits, competition, ever increasing productivity, economic growth, inequality in economic rewards, high levels of consumption, and an everyday life in which each individual is free to pursue his or her atomistic self-interest, oblivious to the needs of the larger social and natural communities, will remain the defining traits of a free market system that is suddenly no longer in conflict with environmental requirements. This is the promise of the idea of “sustainable development” in its dominant formulation.

The fact that this approach to the environment is little more than a further rationalization of the process of mechanistic exploitation that endangered the environment and relegated human beings to the status of “cheerful robots” in the first place, can be seen by examining the ideas of one of the most influential advocates of sustainable development within the world business community, billionaire Swiss industrialist Stephen Schmidheiny, chairman of the Business Council for Sustainable Development. The membership of the council includes top officers of such key multinationals as: Chevron Oil, Volkswagen, Mitsubishi, Nissan, Nippon Steel, S.C. Johnson & Son, Dow Chemical, Browning-Ferris Industries, ALCOA, DuPont, Royal/Dutch Shell, and others. This organization thus represents a cross-section of the largest global corporations. Its views are outlined in Schmidheiny’s book, *Changing Courses*, which was unveiled in time to influence the 1992 Rio Earth Summit.

Five distinct points are stressed in *Changing Courses*. First, it is argued that the free market is the best instrument available for combatting environmental problems, and that sustainable development depends on the further freeing up of the market mechanism. If there is a cause of environmental degradation, it lies not in the self-regulating market itself but in governments and the social choices forced on governments by populations. “The use, exploitation, and degradation of nature,” Schmidheiny writes, “has not created signals of scarcity [that is, appropriate prices for natural resources] because those who

'own' nature and its services—society, expressing its wishes and intentions through government—have tended to give away environmental resources and services for free.” If markets have failed to take into account the full costs associated with environmental degradation, it is argued, this is mainly because governments and populations have intervened to create what are called “market imperfections.”

Second, environmental costs like pollution have generally been treated by businesses as externalities, i.e., costs that do not fall on the businesses themselves but on society at large. Sustainable development, Schmidheiny tells us, demands that such external costs be internalized to some extent by firms: the “Polluter Pays Principle . . . states that polluters should bear the full costs of any damage caused by the production of goods and services.” These costs should be passed on to the consumer in the form of higher prices, forcing consumers to seek cleaner substitutes. The real source of environmental damage, in this conception, lies with consumers not business.

Third, it is argued that corporations are learning to develop total quality management, which is extending to such areas as waste reduction and energy efficiency. The internalization of costs is therefore at one with the development of a higher form of market efficiency, already being promoted by the most advanced corporations.

Fourth, at the international level environmental regulations need to be “harmonized” with each other and with the needs of free trade. “Perhaps the most effective way forward,” Schmidheiny argues, “is to improve the ability of GATT [the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade] to minimize trade interference caused by environmental regulations.”⁷

Fifth, sustainable development is best introduced through the competitive self-regulation of business, with government acting, if at all, in ways that will fine-tune economic instruments in order to provide clearer market signals of economic and environmental scarcity.

This idyllic vision of sustainable development offered by global corporations is rooted in the notion that the market is a

smoothly operating mechanism that guarantees economic and environmental efficiency, as long as it is left free from undue interference. There can be little doubt that some marginal improvements in industrial efficiency, particularly in the use of energy, are compatible with the existing system and can lead to greater environmental as well as economic efficiencies. Ecological modernization along these lines will not, however, solve the larger environmental problem—since this derives from a social order committed to capital-intensive, energy-intensive production, the mechanistic exploitation of nature, and ever-increasing economic expansion. As Frances Cairncross, environmental editor for *The Economist*, Britain's leading business magazine, has admitted, "Many people hope that economic growth can be made environmentally benign. It never truly can. Most economic activity involves using up energy and raw materials; that, in turn, creates waste that the planet has to absorb. Green growth is therefore a chimera." We are far from the social conditions, moreover, where development can occur with only relatively minor impact on the environment.⁸

Even if most of the environmental costs of production could be internalized within the market (which is extremely doubtful, since as the great environmental economist K. William Kapp once remarked, "capitalism must be regarded as an economy of unpaid costs"), this would only set the stage for a more complete human domination of nature. As the philosopher William Leiss has stated, "The trap has been laid, and to subsume the matter of environmental quality under the all-embracing economic calculus is to fall victim to it." Worse still, as long as our socioeconomic order is primarily geared to the accumulation of personal wealth as the means to individual freedom, increased efficiency will only mean a more efficient exploitation of the environment, with disastrous implications for ecosystem survival.⁹

Sustainable development—in the dominant formulation offered by Schmidheiny and others—depends on the privatization of the commons and the assignment of monetary values to parts of the environment that have previously been accorded little or

no value—a process that has been termed “costing the earth.” This should not, however, be confused with genuine sustainability, which would have to be concerned with the reproduction of entire ecosystems. To attach a monetary value to a part of nature—for example, to freshwater fish independent of the river in which they live—is to assume erroneously that everything can be broken down into individual parts, which can simply be aggregated. As the economic geographer David Harvey has observed, “This way of pursuing monetary valuations tends to break down . . . when we view the environment as being constructed organically, ecosystemically, or dialectically rather than as a Cartesian machine with replaceable parts.”¹⁰

Hence, the irony in turning to the economics of sustainable development—in its dominant formulation—for a solution to the environmental problem is that it continues to see human freedom and progress as synonymous with the instrumentalist organization of human beings as self-serving, possessive individualists, even though this is the principal source of environmental destruction in our society. As the radical philosopher Max Horkheimer explained, mechanistic, class-based society has chosen a path whereby the “domination of nature involves the domination of man”:

Economic and social forces take on the character of blind natural powers that man, in order to preserve himself, must dominate by adjusting to them. At the end result of the process, we have on the one hand the self, the abstract ego emptied of all substance except its attempt to transform everything in heaven and on earth into means for its preservation, and on the other hand an empty nature degraded to mere material, mere stuff to be dominated, without any other purpose than that of this very domination.¹¹

The answer to all of this of course is to abandon the prevailing mechanistic conception of human freedom and to construct a society and a human relation to nature that is based on “freedom in general”: not the freedom to exclude others from a genuine relation to nature and the full development of life’s possibilities; but rather the freedom of all to share in life’s development as part of an organic community. We must reject a social system

that demands the fragmentation of all living things and substitute one that promotes wholeness. If we are to save the planet, the economics of individual greed and the social order erected upon it must give way to broader values and a new set of social arrangements, based on a sense of community with life on earth. How this is to be accomplished is another problem.¹²

NOTES

1. David Bohm, "Science, Spirituality, and the Present World Crisis," *ReVision*, 15, no. 4, (Spring 1993): 148-49.
2. Murray Bookchin, *The Limits of the City* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), pp. 60-61.
3. Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, *The Entropy Law and the Economic Process* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 1.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
5. Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1944), pp. 67-73, 178; C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 175.
6. Andrew Bard Schmockler, *Fool's Gold* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), p. 176.
7. Stephen Schmidheiny, *Changing Courses: A Global Business Perspective on Development and the Environment* (Boston: MIT Press, 1992), pp. 14-19, 32-33, 74; Pratap Chatterje and Matthias Finger, *The Earth Brokers* (New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 115-29.
8. Frances Cairncross, *Costing the Earth* (London: The Economist Books, 1991), p. 15.
9. William Leiss, *The Domination of Nature* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1974), pp. xiii-xiv; K. William Kapp, *The Social Costs of Private Enterprise* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 231.
10. David Harvey, "The Nature of Environment," in Ralph Miliband and Leo Panitch, eds., *Socialist Register 1993* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1993), pp. 6-9. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels wrote: "The 'essence' of the freshwater fish is the water of a river. But the latter ceases to be the 'essence' of the fish and is no longer a suitable medium of existence as soon as the river is made to serve industry, as soon as it is polluted by dyes and other waste products, and navigated by steamboats, or as soon as its water is diverted into canals where simple drainage can deprive the fish of its medium of existence." *The German Ideology* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976), p. 66.
11. Max Horkheimer, *The Eclipse of Reason* (New York: Continuum, 1992), pp. 93-97.
12. The concept of "freedom in general" is taken from Karl Marx, *On Freedom of the Press and Censorship*, Saul Padover, ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1974), p. 46.

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HOMAGE TO PASOLINI ON THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS MURDER

by JOHN MAGE

Pier Paolo Pasolini, born in Bologna on March 5, 1922, and raised in the Friuli region of Venetia, is, in the words of Alberto Moravia, *the* major Italian poet of the second half of the twentieth century. He was also a filmmaker, novelist, and political journalist of genius. He was murdered twenty years ago, on November 2, 1975.

A teacher and active Communist in the Friuli, Pasolini was accused of "obscene acts" with teenage boys and "corruption of minors" in the summer of 1949. In 1952 an appellate court finally determined that he had violated no Italian law, but by that time his prior existence was shattered. He had moved to Rome in 1950 and, having no work for two years, lived in abject poverty, sustained in every sense by his mother who had fled with him. Slowly he obtained a pittance for freelance writing of criticism and poetry. In 1955 he published the novel *Ragazzi di vita* [*Real Life Kids*], immediately prosecuted for containing "pornographic content" that was "contrary to good morals." The book was denounced by the Vatican, and also by the Communist Party (PCI). But the prosecution failed (the judges in their opinion praised the book's "authentic lyricism"), and *Ragazzi di vita* ended up as a finalist for the 1955 Strega Prize, Italy's leading literary award. For the rest of his life, Pasolini was at the center of Italy's living culture and politics. And this at a time when Italy's

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culture (particularly its cinema) and politics were for a brilliant moment at the center of the global stage, perhaps to a degree not seen since the sixteenth century. Openly gay and a critical Communist, in 1964 Pasolini utilized the flicker of liberation sparked by Pope John XXIII to make the film *The Gospel According to Matthew*; said Pasolini: “. . . someone who walks up to a couple of people and says, ‘Drop your nets and follow me’ is a total revolutionary.” When, in the wake of 1968, full depictions of things sexual were permitted, Pasolini made the achingly lyrical films *Decameron* (1971), *Canterbury Tales* (1972), and *Thousand and One Nights* (1974), filled with a nostalgia for noncommodified human relations. He denied the films were an appeal for sexual “liberalization”; said Pasolini: “If my films should happen to contribute to the present form of ‘permissiveness’ I would reject them. In fact, I find such permissiveness planned and programmed by those in power.”

In the months before his death Pasolini waged a campaign as a political journalist against the “genocide Marx prophesied in the Manifesto,” a consumerist “genocide in the form of the suicide of an entire country.” He called for the immediate abolition of television, explaining that “genocide” was the “acculturation by the power of consumerism” through the tool of television, that would soon overcome the difference between fascists and anti-fascists in a common imbecility. This has, of course, now come to pass in the form of the unprecedented Italian electoral victories of the television monopolist Berlusconi’s Forza Italia (a political commodity sold like soap) in alliance with the “post” fascists. But the truly awesome prophecy was in Pasolini’s final work as a journalist in September 1975; the consumerist degradation of the Italian people, the environmental degradation of Italy (“there are no more fireflies”), is, he wrote, the crime of the Christian Democratic politicians who had governed the country since 1947. There is only one solution, the Christian Democratic leaders must be put on trial, and charged with “a moral list of crimes.” Pasolini wrote in September 1975 that these are crimes “which should drag a dozen political bosses into the docket in a penal

trial in a courtroom” from which the Italian establishment defendants would emerge “handcuffed between carabinieri.” And so it came to pass.

When charged with sex play with teenage boys in 1949, Pasolini was expelled from the PCI. *L'unita* (the national PCI official daily) printed the expulsion notice warning its readers against “the most harmful aspects of bourgeois degeneration.” Pasolini wrote to *L'unita*: “Despite all of you, I remain and will remain a Communist in the truest sense of the word.” After he was murdered by a male prostitute in November 1975, his coffin lay in state in the party’s Casa di Cultura in the center of Rome, and Enrico Berlinguer, general secretary of the PCI, took his turn as a guard of honor. In his final prophetic clarity, Pasolini had seen but one thing sound in Italy, the PCI (“a clean country in a dirty country, an honest country in a dishonest one . . . a humanistic country in a consumerist one. . . .”). Yet he doubted that the PCI could remain long “uncompromised” (yet another prophecy) in such a divided country. For Pasolini hope lay in a spirit and tradition of revolt that would emerge wherever capitalism reproduces, as it must, a mass of people robbed and brutalized but conscious, for whom the social and cultural genocide by way of Disney is not an anesthetic but a foul sadistic joke.

Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Roman Poems*, translated by Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Francesca Valente, prefaced by Alberto Moravia. (City Lights Books: San Francisco, 1986) pp. 78-79. All other quotes are from Enzo Siciliano, *Pasolini*, translated by John Shepley (New York: Random House, 1982) or B.D. Schwartz, *Pasolini Requiem* (New York: Pantheon, 1992).

ALLA BANDIERA ROSSA

Per chi conosce solo il tuo colore, bandiera rossa,
tu devi realmente esistere, perché lui esista:
chi era coperto di croste è coperto di piaghe,
il bracciante diventa mendicante,
il napoletano calabrese, il calabrese africano,
l'analfabeta una bufala o un cane.

Chi conosceva appena il tuo colore, bandiera rossa,
sta per non conoscerti più, neanche coi sensi:
tu che già vanti tante glorie borghesi e operaie,
ridiventa straccio, e il più povero ti sventoli.

TO THE RED FLAG

For him who only knows your color, red flag,
you must really exist, so that he can exist:
he who was covered with scabs is covered with wounds,
the laborer becomes a beggar,
the Neapolitan a Calabrese, the Calabrese an African,
the illiterate a buffalo or dog.

He who hardly knows your color, red flag,
won't know you much longer, not even with his senses:
you who already boast so many bourgeois
workingclass glories,
you become a rag again, and the poorest wave you.

TRANSITIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA: TO WHAT?

by PETER MARCUSE¹

South Africa is often compared with eastern Europe (as well as other African countries, and sometimes with Spain, Portugal, Brazil, Haiti, or countries elsewhere) as a country “in transition,” moving in the direction in which all history moves, toward democracy and free private markets. But “transition” is not so simple or unidirectional anywhere;² the transition to “the new South Africa” is in fact a three-fold transition, from apartheid to “nonracialism,” from repressive to democratic, and from one economic pattern to another. The first two of those transitions have moved South Africa from the very rear to the front of international progress: the general acceptance of ethnic and “racial” equality is today more firmly entrenched than apartheid was in past decades, and the sense of democratic accountability is, at least for the time being, strong; certainly political freedom, freedom of the press, etc., is unquestioned and local civic participation is highly prized, at least in concept. The new constitution now being widely debated is likely to be one of the most democratic in the world. The effort to integrate older African communal and tribal forms of leadership into a parliamentary democratic framework is likely to be pathbreaking; tribal chiefs are likely to retain a voice in, but not control over, aspects of local government, if local communities want them to. But the

¹ This was written while the author, who normally teaches at Columbia University in New York City, was a visiting Fulbright professor at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg from January to July 1995.

overall assessment of the transitions, particularly the economic ones, poses many questions still.

On the positive side, the obvious accomplishment is the ending, through fully open national elections, of political, social, and legal apartheid, and the overthrow of the regime that produced it. As surprising are the banners under which this was accomplished: "non-racialism" and "reconciliation."

Apartheid was a system of separation, exploitation, and domination just short of slavery.³ Beginning in the late nineteenth century, apartheid was extended through laws restricting African ownership of land in 1912 and after, and carried through with increasingly fanatical determination beginning in 1948, when the Afrikaans-based National Party defeated Smuts' English-based coalition. "Verwoerdian Apartheid" in its heyday meant not only racial segregation, but the formal designation of all individuals as either White, African, Indian, or Coloured, and the determination of where they could live, whom they could marry, where their children went to school, what they were taught, whether they could be in a particular area (cities especially) without a pass, what swimming pool, library, and restaurant they could use, and, of course, whether they could vote. Less formally, the situation was even worse: police brutality was legendary, civil rights in daily life virtually nonexistent, wage differentials immense, and womens' household labor virtually domestic slavery.

But the political and legislative forms of apartheid far exceeded what was either permanently necessary for, or ultimately defensible by, the economic establishment. Under unrelenting pressure from Africans, Indians, and "Coloureds," led by the ANC, civic organizations, and the trade unions, concessions periodically accompanied ongoing repression. Indians and Coloureds were given nominal representation in a tricameral legislature in 1983, petty apartheid in amenities was slowly repealed, black local self-government (under tight central control) was attempted, and resisted, in the late 1980s, and influx controls limiting nonwhite access to cities were repealed in 1985. The heads of the major corpora-

tions, including Anglo-American, South Africa's largest corporation (mining, real estate, diversified investments), read the tea leaves accurately; they set up the Urban Foundation to invest in the upgrading of black housing and services as early as 1976, immediately following the Soweto uprising. Contact with Nelson Mandela, already then imprisoned twenty years on Robben Island, was first taken up by the government leadership in 1984, and serious negotiations began in 1988. The result was the first open national election in 1994, with the universally accepted victory of the African National Congress under Mandela.

The banner under which that victory was won was non-racialism and reconciliation. "Non-racialism" sounds strange to U.S. ears. It is not inconsistent with either the concept of a Rainbow nation, frequently used here, or of multiculturalism, in fact promoted in South Africa in a more thoroughgoing fashion than we are used to. In the ANC's history, exclusion of whites was early rejected; all of its campaigns before winning power sought to rally Coloureds, Indians, and progressive whites to its banner.⁴ Ethnic and tribal tensions played little role within the ANC, and appeared on the national scene during apartheid largely as a result of explicit National Party policy, which fostered divisions through the allocation of land in townships by ethnic origin and heavily subsidized and supported the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party as a counterweight to the ANC. The ANC has taken great pains to avoid such divisions. Today eleven languages—English, Afrikaans, and nine African languages—are recognized as official languages; instruction is to be available in their home language to pupils in all eleven, broadcasting is required to serve all eleven, official documents must be available to anyone requiring them in all eleven, and public funds are committed to promoting live use and development of all eleven. The new national anthem is likely to contain verses in all eleven. The lingua franca is still English, and it is still the most popular second language in schools, but most South Africans are multi-lingual, and English is no longer the imperial tongue.

"Nonracialism," however, has implications that go beyond linguistic or cultural diversity. It sets as a realizable goal the rejection of "race" as an operative category in public life (respect for ethnic cultural diversity is a different matter). Race is held in theory to be an indicator of likely past disadvantage, not a basis for action per se. "Equity" is preferred⁵ to "affirmative action" as the term for promoting equal opportunity for those previously discriminated against. Programs for promoting Africans, as well as Indians and Coloureds, the discredited categories of apartheid, are roundly criticized. African leaders are insistent that neither color nor ethnicity, but prior official discrimination, unite those now entitled to assistance. Nonracialism has also reassured whites, and with reason; the economically privileged position of whites has not changed significantly, there has been no mass exodus, white investment is growing, and personal relations across "racial" lines are not tense. The Pan-African movement is almost alone in seeing color as a basis for accepting or rejecting people; members harassed white teachers in black townships in the East Rand—one was shot—to the vocal dismay of the large majority of residents and to virtually unanimous public condemnation. Steve Biko's black consciousness movement was founded on self-empowerment; it was separatist, but transitionally, and not anti-white.

Race relations in South Africa offer an unsettling contrast with those in the United States. Partly it is a matter of feel, partly of context. Tensions along lines of color are fewer here than in the United States, despite a long history of white domination and exploitation that goes back as far as ours and was certainly more severe in the last fifty years. Widespread separation still exists residentially, socially, and institutionally. Students in the now quite integrated universities still sit in the cafeterias clustering by race and friendship circles are still basically homogeneous (among Afrikaners and English too, incidentally). But the separation is rarely hostile: there are not gang fights along racial lines; whites are no more insecure in Soweto or in downtown Johannesburg than blacks; car-jack-

ings, increasingly common as security devices make the theft of unattended cars more difficult, are based on the value and marketability of the car, not the race of the driver; conversations with colleagues are less aware of race; there is less consciousness of p.c. issues, either in the positive or the negative sense, than in the United States.

A British reporter recently wrote in *The Star* that people were much more uptight about race in the United States than in South Africa, "which leads me to the thought," he concluded, "that the problem of race relations is perhaps a great deal more intractable in the United States than it is in South Africa."⁶ When Roger Wilkins writes, in the pages of the *Nation*, that the United States "is the most color-conscious society on earth," he need not except South Africa today; ten years ago he would have had to. When he writes that "any sense of ownership [of America] comes hard" to blacks in the United States, the same would have been said by black South Africans ten years ago, but not today; today they have no doubt that the country is theirs, and are simply impatient to benefit from the fact. No search for identity or roots concerns Africans, who after all are the overwhelming majority of the population, and now firmly hold political power throughout the country. ANC members returning from exile did not hesitate to, nor had little difficulty in buying houses in the white suburbs; no questions were raised when Mandela bought a house in Houghton, a plush northern white suburb of Johannesburg, instead of in Soweto.

Integration in the schools, an open sore in the United States, has gone smoothly, although within severe limits imposed by spatial segregation, economic disparity, and gross shortage of facilities, particularly in the townships and informal settlements. There have only been a few reported incidents of racial hostility under what is essentially a simple open enrollment system. Many white parents send their children to private schools, true, but the significance of that is more ambiguous than in the United States, since private schools here, particularly the religious ones, were often integrated

long before apartheid was abolished. Progressive parents often used them to find, not to avoid, integration.

Mamphela Ramphele, the up-and-coming deputy vice-chancellor of the University of Cape Town, phrased it this way:

There are two main differences between social conditions in South Africa and those in the United States. First, the United States has a majority white population. . . . Second, there was little questioning of the U.S. socio-economic system beyond its racism. The American dream was, and still is, the basis for their socio-economic system, and the clamor is not to transform the system but to gain access to it. South Africans face very different challenges. We have . . . committed ourselves to fundamental transformation of our social relations. . . . We thus have to look beyond affirmative action to tackle our problems of inequality. A vision of an equitable South Africa depends on an acknowledgment that apartheid was a monumentally successful affirmative action program which mainly benefited white males. . . . A program intended to redress the ills bequeathed by the past must not fall into the same pit. It must not be punitive but rather seek to create an equal opportunity environment to bring out the best in all citizens. . . . it must be informed by a vision of equity.⁷

Perhaps American white males, as Roger Wilkins would say, are not ready for such a vision yet.

Gender disparities are treated differently from "racial" categories; sex is indisputably a permanent and socially relevant difference, and women do not hold political power as black men do. The ANC has adopted a policy position requiring 30 percent of its parliamentary members to be women, and the speaker of Parliament is a woman. In high administrative positions much still remains to be done, but explicit attention is devoted to seeking out and promoting women. The ANC has taken a strong position permitting abortion as a right, but it is a political hot potato. The commission drafting the new constitution is considering the right to abortion for inclusion (as a gender equality provision certainly will be), but the issue may also be left for the quite liberal Constitutional Court to resolve.

If nonracialism is one, reconciliation is the other surpris-

ing banner under which the ANC acts in South Africa. Politically motivated crimes, including unspeakable acts of terrorism (mail bombs, assassinations, torture) were agreed to be amnestied as part of the negotiations leading up to the elections; a Truth Commission has been established, and anyone seeking amnesty needs simply to disclose fully their misdeeds.⁸ Of course there were acts of violence on the side of the ANC and others in the resistance, too; but reconciliation is not seen simply as an unfortunate necessity to avoid further violence (which it undoubtedly also was), but as a fundamental social principle of the new South Africa. Nelson Mandela embodies the new spirit. I doubt if there is a political leader in the world today as universally respected as Mandela; even after a year in office, with all the crises that year produced, he still rates 9 1/2 stars out of 10 in the *Weekly Mail & Guardian's* report card on the new government. Only one half of a star was lost due to the partially botched (in formal terms) firing from her government post of Winnie Mandela, whose "populism," while it resonates widely among those impatient at the pace of progress, is considered destructive by leading activists across most of the political spectrum.

The meaning of reconciliation here can again be highlighted by comparing it to what has happened elsewhere. In Germany, the takeover of the GDR by the BRD was accompanied by a ban of those in significant political or administrative positions in the GDR from public employment in the unified country. Spies of the GDR were prosecuted for their efforts and political motivation, rather than grounds for amnesty, was made a crime more heinous. In South Africa, civil servants under the old regime were guaranteed their jobs for at least five years and could bid on any new jobs created. Those acting out of political motives or in obedience to then lawful orders were given amnesty or the opportunity for it if they disclosed their acts. In Argentina, the President, by contrast, advises the old military to keep silent about their activities, and prosecution seems out of the question. The possibility of openly dealing with the abuses of the Stalinist era has, since

Gorbachev, hardly even been mooted.⁹ In most of eastern Europe, involvement in the ruling institutions of the past is subject to undifferentiated formal opprobrium, and largely forgotten in practice; the effort in South Africa is to do the opposite.

Economically, in the everyday, material life of the majority, the positive aspects are not so apparent. The gap between rich and poor is enormous: schools with eighty pupils in a room, no electricity, holes in the roof (the latest picture on the front page of *The Star* is of a school held in the open, desks lined up in a field; and still pupils are reported waiting to be admitted, because there are not enough desks!); ordinary housing in the white suburbs that would put Scarsdale to shame and shacks that make the barrios of Rio look palatial. Ending apartheid does not eliminate the differences; it will take enormous resources to do so. The economy was on a downslide when Mandela and de Klerk began their risky discussions; it has now turned around, in terms of GNP (growth of about 3 percent is estimated for next year, just ahead of a population growth rate of 2.6 percent, although predictions beyond that question the ability to stay ahead). Foreign investment is increasing, although for the first time there is a balance of trade deficit as more foreign consumer goods are becoming available. There has not yet been a need to turn to the International Monetary Fund for loans, although "experts" predict that time will soon come. The proposed budget is almost in balance; it is typical of the paradoxical nature of South African politics today that one of the leaders of the illegal underground ANC military force, Joe Modise, now the Minister of Defense, is pushing hard for the expenditure of six million rand for three new navy corvettes, with the full support of his Deputy Minister, Ronnie Kasrils, also from the ANC military wing and a member of the South African Communist Party. Both oppose the ANC minister in charge of the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP), the ANC's and now the government's formal economic strategy. RDP is both one of the great successes (it

was adopted with overwhelming support) and reflective of one of the great limitations (in hedging on fundamental economic issues such as national ownership) of the new economic policies. The long-term direction of the RDP is the big open question.

Key players in shaping national economic policy are the same individuals who held power before. In the South African Reserve Bank and the Ministry of Finance, for instance, Ben Turok, long in exile and now a left member of Parliament, explained the continued leadership of economically conservative white men in the national administration by saying that "it was probably wise . . . if only to reassure the world of business that the political revolution would not be accompanied by an equally radical economic revolution."¹⁰ But a radical economic revolution was at least in the spirit of much of the 1955 Freedom Charter, which called for "Public ownership of mines and banks . . . [the redistribution of land] among those who work it."¹¹

The RDP states:

The South African economy is in a deep-seated structural crisis and as such requires fundamental reconstruction. . . .¹² the democratic government must play a leading and enabling role in guiding the economy and the market toward reconstruction and development. The democratic government must . . . consider . . . increasing the public sector in strategic areas through, for example, nationalization, purchasing a shareholding in companies, establishing new public corporations or joint ventures with the private sector.¹³

The political landscape would suggest movement in radical directions. The South African Communist Party, the SACP, today perhaps the largest ideologically Marxist party in the world, is part of the alliance that put the ANC in office. Its members hold both top ministerial as well as legislative posts, and they believe that present policies continue to hold the promise of a socialist transformation of South Africa. "Comrade" is the customary term of address within the ANC, and top Communist Party leaders such as Chris Hani and Joe Slovo (one black and one white) commanded mass admiration in

the country; the first was assassinated, the second died of cancer recently (a mail bomb addressed to him in exile killed his wife instead) and their funerals were among the biggest public events of the last few years. COSATU, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, and SANCO, the South African National Civic Organization, are also part of the alliance with the ANC. SANCO was (it has recently been weakened because so many of its leaders now hold positions in government) a strong, very grassroots-based organization. Its member local civic organizations had played a leading role in the township resistance movements which undermined apartheid's power, and many saw it as creating a radical new and popular basis for political democracy. COSATU is among the strongest, most militant, and most Marxist-influenced labor movements in the world. Mandela himself has been open to Marxist ideas. In intellectual circles, debates on fundamental economic issues are ongoing, and socialist alternatives are within the mainstream of discussion.

But many in the international business community have expressed their concern about this socialist current in the liberation movement. The fact that the Communist Party is a member of the ANC alliance is often highlighted abroad; the South African ambassador to the United States seems to spend much of his time arguing that it will make little difference in government policies.

And he is basically right. While only the far right in South Africa sees redbaiting as worth the effort, the reality of current economic policy is much less cause for concern for business than some of the early economic formulations suggest. The economic policies promoted by the fiscal conservatives of whom Turok wrote are dominant. They are close to neoliberal: fiscal discipline, balanced budgets, free trade, entry into GATT, wage restraint, gradualism, attraction of foreign investment, are the common goals of all members of the Government of National Unity, although these are coupled with a strongly voiced commitment to maintain wage levels, and to reject sweat-shop opportunities. Privatization, not nationaliza-

tion, is on the agenda, even if its extent and pace is under debate.¹⁴ Housing policy is based on public-private partnerships, espouses home ownership, and leans heavily on private financing. The debate between growth and redistribution as the best route to development is answered by a commitment to both at the same time, the potential contradictions remaining repressed. Although land restitution is considered to have the potential to be one of the most fundamental economic transformations brought about by the end of apartheid, it is thus far limited, and the idea of confiscation has been rejected in favor of full payment to those giving up rights, however acquired. World Bank and International Monetary Fund advice is widely listened to and respected, even though significant funding has not yet been forthcoming. Taxes remain limited, as significant increases are viewed as discouraging investment. In practice, one of the two major changes in economic policies seems to be a greater openness to international exchange and investment. What will be the ultimate resolution of the tension between that policy and the other major change, that toward improvement in wages and working conditions for the mass of South African workers, remains a central problem both theoretically and practically.

The elimination of apartheid was considered by many to have been inevitably linked to the transformation, if not the elimination, of capitalism. The fight against one was seen as a fight against the other. Certainly the linkage was close. But it turns out, as might be expected, that capitalism can survive quite well without apartheid. The combination of apartheid and capitalism created major economic problems, and extreme disparities in wealth and power. However, it was not only apartheid that created the disparities, but the extraordinary exploitation on which the economy of South Africa was built, exploitation that apartheid facilitated but did not create. That exploitation continues, despite a vigorous trade union movement and a strong and class-conscious Communist Party; but at this point both are part of the governing alliance with the ANC, the Government of National Unity, and

the pressure is on to tone down wage demands in the interests of international competitiveness. The vice-president of Anglo-American recently recommended that the country see its advantages as being a "low-wage, high-productivity" economy. The government's policy on such issues is as yet unclear; a new National Economic Development and Labor Council, with labor, business, civic, and governmental representation, has recently been formed, based on the model of the earlier negotiating forums that were key parts of the process leading to national elections. Whether the corporatist pattern will take over, and with what result, remains to be seen.

The tension in government between neoliberal economic policy and a prolabor orientation poses difficult practical decisions for many on the left. COSATU, SANCO, and the SACP were all parts of the coalition that ousted the old apartheid regime; they all foresaw economic as well as political and "racial" change as part of their objective. They each have members in key executive and legislative posts, are strongly opposed to unbridled privatization, and are struggling to define a perspective integrating essentially socialist ideals with practical measures. Is it possible to support, indeed to stay within, a government some of whose policies all three of these constituencies see as contrary to their fundamental goals? Discussions of splitting off, of asserting greater independence, of the Communist Party running independent candidates, are periodic, but still muted. Vice-President Thabo Mbeki, often spoken of as Mandela's successor in the ANC and now Deputy President, has suggested that the ANC might split up by the next national election in 1999; but no one seems anxious to explore the issue right now. There is too much to lose by breaking up the alliance at this stage of the game.

Spatial apartheid will also outlast the elimination of legal apartheid. The townships and group areas range from unspeakable hovels to minimum quality, durable public housing. They are generally in undesirable locations, in terms of environmental conditions and access to the cities; and they were strictly segregated by "race." With the ending of legal apartheid, some are

able to move out, and middle-class and higher income Indians, Coloureds, and Africans earlier confined like their poorer cousins to the townships, are likely to move to formerly all-white cities and suburban areas; even some working-class nonwhites will, by dint of overcrowding and forced tolerance of deterioration, move into formerly white inner city areas, such as Hillbrow in Johannesburg, which share similarities with many ghettos in the United States. But the prospects for change in the townships are not that bright. Whites are not likely to move in (there aren't that many, anyway), nor are new nonwhites with better earnings. Apartheid may thus end in middle- and upper-income areas, diminish in some city working-class areas, but remain a fact of life for the poor, including most Africans.¹⁵ The real estate market, with assistance from its unenlightened friends, may still produce patterns of apartheid not so different from the old or from those growing in the United States, in which class will combine with race to form the ghettos of a contemporary unequal society.¹⁶

The real hope for future economic transformation lies in the forces that produced the political transformation. The "transition" literature speaks of the typical peaceful transition as the result of agreements among elites; the South African transition involved leadership negotiations also, and very sophisticated ones, but it was made possible, propelled, and made necessary by action from below. The relatively peaceful revolution from below was the result of mass action; broad social movements of trade unionists, civic organizations, women, and peasants that united and had the committed support of the large majority of the people of the country. It may be that it was as peaceful as it was because those in power perceived political change as inevitable if they were to retain economic privilege, and that Ben Turok's understanding was an implicit, if unspoken and perhaps even unrecognized, part of the agreement for the transition. But it may also be that the momentum for change from below that led to the astonishing political and racial transformation of South Africa may carry over to achieve parallel economic changes.

That question remains open, although the possibili-

ties seem, at this moment, to be limited. In the meantime, the changes that have already been accomplished make South Africa one of the few places in the world today where progressive change is still in the forefront of the public agenda.

NOTES

1. While I owe a great deal to various colleagues and friends in South Africa, to whom I am very grateful, the point of view here is clearly that of a visitor from the United States, and all errors of fact and idiosyncrasies of interpretation remain mine.
2. For a provocative discussion in the South African context, see Eddie Webster and Glenn Adler "Challenging Transitions Theory" *Politics and Society* 23, no. 1 (March 1995).
3. Its precise economic analysis was a subject of much discussion on the left. Extreme wage slavery, certainly. Not legal slavery, in the sense of the masters' property rights in the bodies of their slaves; but social slavery, in the direct legal control by the state on behalf of the masters of central aspects of their subjects' lives, down to the minutiae of residential location, marriage, education, local mobility, recreation, all public services, yes. The term "racial Fordism,"—Fordist capitalist organization, coupled with the use of race to enhance exploitation—was at one point widely used to describe the system, but at best it covers it only partly; it is a term that is perhaps more appropriate to the United States in the heyday of its manufacturing domination.
4. Indeed, the United Democratic Front, the legal forerunner of open ANC participation in the formal political process in South Africa, was explicitly such a coalition. The Pan African Congress split from the ANC in 1959 because of the growing influence of whites, Indians, and Communists in the ANC.
5. Not universally, of course; "affirmative action" is widely defended under that name, there are set-asides of new government positions which are reserved for blacks, scholarship programs are officially targeted at blacks (or non-whites). Caroline White has pointed out to me the wide spectrum of opinion on the matter, and has suggested a strong rationale for continuing affirmative action in South Africa, along traditional lines espoused here also. A paper in progress discusses the issues in more detail.
6. John Carlin in *The Weekend Star*, 22-23 April 1995.
7. Ramphela, Mamphela. *Democracy in Action*, 9, No. 2, 18 (April 1995).
8. "Simply" is not quite correct; the debate rages over what information must be provided in public and when privacy is to be protected, whether civil suits for damages by victims are precluded, what discretion the Commission has in giving or denying amnesty, and, above all, how the Commission will in fact act. But the general principle of amnesty for those acknowledging political crimes is generally, although not universally, accepted.
9. Even in Haiti, Aristide takes the position (with some justification) that the

- crimes of the military so outweigh the possibly unjustified acts of resistance that the latter are not appropriate for investigation by a public commission.
10. *Weekly Mail and Guardian* 28 April-4 May 1995.
 11. P. Hudson, "Images of the future and strategies in the present: the Freedom Charter and South African left," in *State, Resistance, and Change in South Africa*, Frankel, P. Pines, and Swilling, eds. (Johannesburg: Southern Books, 1988) pp. 259-77; G. Williams, "Celebrating the Freedom Charter," *Transformation* 6, (1988): 73-86. These provisions were further reviewed at a major ANC conference in Morogoro, Tanzania, in 1969. See William Beinhart, *Twentieth-Century South Africa* (Cape Town: Oxford, 1994) p. 215.
 12. RDP, *Building the Economy*, Section 4.1.1.
 13. RDP, Sections 4.2.3 and 4.2.5.1. The White Paper spelling out the government's policies implementing the RDP has been widely criticized for diluting the movement toward social ownership even further.
 14. An oddity of apartheid political policies was the state ownership of certain major enterprises that are conventionally private in market economies, such as the major arms production facility, Armscor, the steel producer Iscor, and the major electric utility. Privatization of these does not quite have the same political connotation as privatization, say, of public education has in the United States.
 15. The trajectory of Indians and Coloureds is still an open question. They have always been legally separated from, and generally treated better than, black Africans; average incomes are almost double, education levels are higher, etc. The National Party is making a big play for the Coloured vote, particularly in the Cape. For most purposes, nonwhite is still the operative category, e.g., for affirmative action; but realistically the situations have substantial differences.
 16. I've spelled out this argument, calling it the development of a "quartered" society, in detail elsewhere. See "The Excluded Ghetto and Advanced Homelessness," *Enzo Minglone*, forthcoming.

Continued from back cover

The trouble with this is the proposition (2): investment does not depend on saving. It depends on the anticipated rate of profit which is a very different thing from the average realized profit rate and, other things remaining equal, will be adversely affected by any increase in saving.

Mr. Rattner's case against increasing inequality is a lot stronger than he recognizes. In addition to social and moral arguments, there is a strictly economic one which becomes more powerful the longer the trend to increasing inequality persists.

There are a few errors that appeared in the September issue regarding the Los Angeles MR discussion group. The group meets on the third Wednesday of every month. Interested persons should contact Ronald Spriestersbach at 213-876-1767.

CORRESPONDENCE

Lenin, Gramsci, and Marzani

by Christopher Phelps

Percy Brazil, in his tribute and eulogy to his friend Carl Marzani ("Memories of Carl Marzani," *Monthly Review*, March 1995), makes a point of emphasizing the place of Antonio Gramsci in the development of Marzani's independent communist world-view. The significance of Marzani's work on Gramsci is without question. His publication of a slender volume of selected Gramsci quotations, *The Open Marxism of Antonio Gramsci* (Cameron Associates, 1957), made Marzani the first translator of Gramsci into English. His accompanying textual notes were the interpretive lens through which many American readers viewed Gramsci for the first time. But Brazil imparts to Marzani a particular interpretation of Gramsci that he did not hold—not in 1957, at least. "Carl," writes Brazil, "was a Gramscian rather than a Leninist. Lenin's approach, simply put, was he who is not with us is against us. Gramsci's (and Carl's) approach was, he who is not against us is with us."

If one had to live life by one or the other of these political axioms, there's no doubt which one is most sensible. But was Gramsci really counterposed to Lenin, in Marzani's view? No such bifurcation of Gramsci and Lenin existed in *The Open Marxism of Antonio Gramsci*. Let us leave aside the question of whether Brazil's pithy declarations ("he who is not with us is against us," "he who is not against us is with us") adequately capture the essence of Lenin and Gramsci. Some latitude is warranted, since Brazil makes those judgments casually. More to the point is Marzani's own views on Lenin and Gramsci. Here is Marzani's first mention of Lenin in his introduction to *The Open Marxism of Antonio Gramsci*:

Christopher Phelps is the editor of *Against the Current* and an occasional contributor to *Monthly Review*.

The deeper one's Marxism the less one's dogmatism. But a prerequisite for deepening one's knowledge of Marxism is to take Marxism seriously. This is the foundation of Gramsci's thought, as it was Lenin's. (p. 6)

The next:

Gramsci is the analyst of the superstructure, par excellence. In area after area—sociology, politics, mass psychology, literature, etc.—he deepened Marxism, sometimes going further than Lenin, for in many areas Lenin *acted* as a Marxist but did not write and develop the lessons of his experiences. (p. 7)

Finally, while describing Gramsci's clever device of using secret codes and phrases to circumvent the fascist prison censors, Marzani writes:

Marxism is called the philosophy of praxis (from the Greek, to do, practice); Marx is called the founder of the philosophy of praxis and Engels the second founder; Lenin is the greatest modern theorist of practice; *Capital* becomes the critique of political economy, and so on. (pp. 13-14)

Neither the introduction to *The Open Marxism of Antonio Gramsci* nor its accompanying notes, in short, contains the slightest hint that the Marxism of Gramsci should be counterposed to the Marxism of Lenin. On the contrary, Marzani took Gramsci's thought to rest upon the prior achievements of Lenin, "the greatest modern theorist of practice," and to represent the *development*—not the displacement—of Lenin's worldview. That Gramsci accomplished things in the sphere of culture that Lenin could not, due to the exigencies of his revolutionary tasks, did not in Marzani's view make their relationship antagonistic.

Recent intellectual trends give this matter some importance, for the fate of Gramsci in the intervening years since 1957 is to have become, as historian T.J. Jackson-Lears put it, "the Marxist who's safe to bring home to Mother." Gramsci has become safe, tame, denatured—a wisp of his revolutionary self. Academics seeking to justify their retreat into highly abstruse theories have created fanciful illusions about their "counterhegemonic" activity. They have created a mythical Gramsci who holds views he never did, including an opposition to revolutionary socialist organization of the sort that he, following upon Lenin, held indispensable. We ought to remember and uphold Marzani's early investigations of Gramsci for the precise reason that he resisted any such dichotomy between these two great minds of revolutionary Marxism. If anything can be inferred from *The Open Marxism of Antonio Gramsci*, it is that Carl Marzani would have rejected that dichotomy for the artifice that it is.

A Response to Toporowski

by Jeff Rudin

I write in response to Jan Toporowski's challenging Review of the Month, "The Contradictions of Market Socialism" (April 1995). While agreeing with the analysis offered, I was still left dissatisfied. My quarrel is not with what Toporowski said, but rather with what he didn't say. Like all the other contributions I've read on the lessons to be learned from our first attempts to build socialism, the focus of the Review was on technical economic problems. These problems are important, of course. But the struggle to build socialism is not primarily a technical challenge.

One of the lessons of the twentieth century is that the realization of socialism—communism in infant form—requires a free process of internalized self-liberation involving a large proportion of the population. Such a requirement has usually been seen as being attached only to the realization of communism. The evidence now suggests that it applies even to socialism. This means that a large number of workers have freely to recognize that "people are people by people" (as some South African tribes put it) and that everyone is therefore simultaneously both parent and child of everyone else, that each of us is the creator of other people's collective creation. With people thus as the ultimate value, all products of people's labor, including the inanimate products of everyday life, acquire an inherent value. Everything made by people affirms the producer's universal humanity and unique individuality. (Among many other things, this seems to me to be the radical basis for campaigns against waste.)

Jeff Rudin is a PhD student studying the history of a black, municipal union in Cape Town, South Africa. He was a work-leader in a public sector trade union in Britain for twenty years.

Until this understanding is fully internalized and freely becomes an integral part of the consciousness of a large number of workers, in both factories and on farms, the multiple alienations of what Marx called humanity's "pre-history" will continue to get in the way of the best constructed technical plans and will continue to reproduce the waste and inefficiencies that plagued the Soviet Union, for instance. The socialist project simply cannot work without the self-directed support of a sufficient number of autonomous individuals for whom the (probably never-ending) struggle to overcome alienation is a primary objective.

An economy will work only to the extent that its producers are motivated. Workers—for whom socialism is no more than a slogan, a passport to career advancement, or an externally imposed ideology—respond to the work situation as alienated producers. But the alienated workers of socialism have far less reason to work than the wage-slaves of capitalism. Besides being bribed by the enticement of a constantly renewed array of false needs, workers, under capitalism, are very effectively disciplined by the constant fear of unemployment, illness, and old age. The alienated workers of what passed for socialism had neither the fears nor the material incentives of the capitalist worker to motivate their labors. Technical solutions that ignore this human factor must inevitably fail.

The nearest Toporowski comes to recognizing the human factor is a passing reference to Works Councils. Yet Works Councils that reproduce the prevailing inequities of the larger society are part of the problem, not the solution. Worker leaders (i.e., workers elected to leading positions within or by a trade union) are part of the problem as long as their constituency is *content* with the division between themselves and those who speak on their behalf, even if the leaders are bound by the *forms* of democratic control and accountability.

I have no answers to these various problems. This letter is merely an appeal for the questions themselves to be recognized.

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BOOKS

Guatemalan Workers Take On Coke

by Hobart Spalding

Trade Unionists Against Terror. Guatemala City, 1954-1985, Deborah Levinson-Estrada. Chapel: Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994. i-vii, 288pp. Photographs. \$45.00 cloth; \$15.95 paper.

Deborah Levinson-Estrada, who teaches history at Boston College, has written a very important book. It is important because of its contribution to Guatemalan and Latin American labor history, the insights that it sheds on the workings of transnational corporations, and the questions that it raises about the nature of class struggle in the periphery. The author has important things to say about such key issues as class, unions, gender, and ethnicity.

This book is really three parts in one. The first is a history of the Guatemalan labor movement from 1944 to present, concentrating upon its urban aspects. It sketches the feeble development of working-class organizations in the dictatorial years prior to 1944. It then looks at their emergence during the social democratic revolution from 1944-1954, a surge cut short by the U.S.-backed coup which reestablished a right-wing subservient regime after toppling the Arbenz government. It then picks up the thread of how workers slowly rebuilt organizations, pointing out the important role played by a progressive Catholic youth movement in the revival of unions from the dark period that preceded the 1960s. This second part then describes the working-

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class movement as it reformed to challenge capital, national and foreign. The last part focuses upon the almost unbelievable strike waged by workers of the local Coca-Cola bottling plant, including an occupation of the plant that lasted more than a year.

Levinson-Estrada bases her analysis largely on interviews with those involved in the Coke strike. The result is dramatic. The reader is carried through the process in the words of the actors. Testimony of people who saw comrades killed, or descriptions of the anxiety of waiting in the worker-occupied plant for the U.S.-trained elite assault units to forcefully and violently evict the strikers, grips the reader. The solidarity displayed by workers and their families despite all the obstacles and the life-threatening situations involved are impressive.

The book delves into the problems of building a strong worker's movement in economically backward areas and in authoritarian states. Why should men and women participate if it means the loss of a job in a situation where gaining another one could be very difficult? Why would women participate when men tended to dominate the movement? Just how does a union or strike committee overcome gender and ethnic differences among the workforce? All of these questions are discussed in detail, not only in theoretical terms but also in the words and deeds of those involved. Sometimes the solutions that the movement forged worked, sometimes they did not, but always the workers grappled, and continued to grapple, with the problems that arose in their march toward the final goal: victory over the bottling company and its local owners, and most importantly, dignity for themselves, their families, and their fellow workers.

Perhaps the book's major weakness is that it does not fully explore the international nature of the struggle and the importance of the victory that the Guatemalan workers eventually secured. An international campaign mounted by the London-based International Union of Food and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) put constant pressure on Coke and its licensee. Workers in the Scandinavian countries, Australia, Germany, Holland, and elsewhere picked up the campaign by demanding that their companies remove Coke machines from vending areas. Decals showing blood flowing from Coke bottles, placed in public areas in a dozen countries by solidarity advocates, also helped pressure the Atlanta-based giant.

At first, the huge transnational denied any responsibility for events taking place with a subcontractor in Guatemala, but critics insisted that the parent assume responsibility anywhere its logo appeared. Although the company never admitted complicity at any level, eventually Coke caved, leading the way to a settlement favorable to the workers, one that has held right to the present with only minor

difficulties. The fact that shareholding Catholic orders in the United States appeared at the company's annual meetings, and managed to smuggle a Guatemalan worker to the "open" mike at one gathering, brought the issue to public attention and tarnished the company's image.

Levinson-Estrada's work sheds light on many different themes. She shows, for example, the importance of a common cultural experience in terms of building and maintaining solidarity among workers. She conclusively demonstrates that unions are not just shop-floor based, but that they effectively become a way of life for all participants—members, spouses, children. In addition, she argues that the alliance between capital and the state holds firm when it comes to the lives of local workers (repression, intimidation, and assassination), but that it can be cracked when imperialist international pressure comes forcefully into play. The Coca-Cola Company, for example, not only changed the policy of its licensee, but it also altered that of the Guatemalan government when the company really felt that its interests could be adversely affected.

The book is superbly written and captivates the reader throughout. The frequent inclusion of the works of the protagonists adds a dimension of reality seldom found in historical writing. A glossary is included for those not familiar with Guatemalan or international organizations. The texts of the author's interviews with three of her many informants comprise a lengthy appendix. Photographs interspersed throughout the text graphically illustrate a number of points, often much more effectively than words.

The book supports a Leninist interpretation of why and how workers resist capital. What comes through the pages is a clear sense of the heroic struggles waged by Guatemalan workers not only to better their lives but also to establish their presence via the union as people who have to be recognized and, if not, as people willing to struggle and die (and too many did) for what they believe. For us here in the United States the lesson is very clear. Pressure on the transnationals on all fronts remains important for our class sisters and brothers in the Third World, perhaps even more key now, given the new global trading blocs in formation. The fact that Swedish or Australian workers can help their Guatemalan counterparts by not buying a Coke or asking a shop steward to demand that the vending machine gets removed, or even by trashing that machine, is something we all should contemplate. In an era of increasingly rapid globalization of capital, the story of the Coke strike in Guatemala shows the necessity for a re-internationalization of the working-class movement as well. And, hopefully, it suggests that such a process can take place.

Unraveling Washington's Cold War

by Victor Wallis

Frank Kofsky, *Harry S. Truman and the War Scare of 1948: A Successful Campaign to Deceive the Nation*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993. xii + 420 pp. \$35.00 cloth; \$16.95 paper.

Once the Soviet Union began to withdraw from the arms race in the late 1980s, liberal commentators in the United States popularized the argument that “now at last” it would be possible to move quickly toward a reordering of official priorities: away from military spending—extravagant levels of which could “no longer” be justified—and toward the funding of urgent social needs.

Many progressive activists eagerly adapted their pitch to this line of argument, even though in so doing they were conferring retrospective legitimacy on the “defense” budgets of the previous four decades. To do this was of course to follow a line of least resistance, but the option of challenging such a line seemed to require an expertise that went far beyond most people's awareness. And besides, if all could now agree that the threat was ended, why bother about whether or not it had been artificially concocted at the outset?

The experience of the last few years, and in particular the withering of any “peace dividend” under the onslaught of the Panama invasion, the Gulf War, and subsequent imperial missions, ought certainly to have shaken this kind of thinking. Most dramatic was the about face in Washington's rationale for its campaign

Victor Wallis is working on a book on the domestic consequences of U.S. imperialism.

against Cuba; suddenly, this had nothing at all to do with Cuba's being a Soviet ally. Here was at least partial proof that, for the U.S. ruling class, the specter of alleged Soviet expansionism was never more than a pretext for its deeper fear of successful revolutions.

So far, however, this lesson does not seem to have spread very widely. Had it done so—had the essential fraudulence of Washington's decades-old military rationale become a matter of common knowledge—we might have found greater skepticism about official justifications for the more recent U.S. shows of force.

This is where Frank Kofsky's work comes in. There is a desperate need not just for proof that established political leaders lie (which is widely recognized), but that they use lies to shape the most basic assumptions of political debate. Kofsky shows precisely this, with reference to a key stage in the formation of U.S. Cold War policy.

The main developments in the period of his study (February–April 1948) are (1) the U.S. decision to underwrite European capitalist reconstruction (the Marshall Plan) and (2) the first major escalation of the post-Second World War U.S. arms budget. By the time these steps were undertaken, U.S. policymakers had virtually completed the scrapping of Washington's wartime alliance with the Soviet Union.¹ The one task they still had to carry out was to secure a consensus in Congress supporting the expenditures they envisioned. It is in this context that the already considerable paranoia orchestrated by the government was now raised to fever pitch.

Kofsky describes the relevant behind-the-scenes maneuvers in remarkable detail. His book is a model of historical detective work, guiding the reader gently but zealously through an immense quantity of unpublished documents. The author clearly has more in mind than just filling in the historical record; he is laying bare the enduring cynicism of the U.S. ruling class.

His account of Washington's intentional misreadings of Soviet conduct—especially in the artfully contrived, ambiguously alarmist “Clay telegram” of March 1948—reinforces the findings of Marzani and of later New Left historians on the Cold War's origins. It is an important addition, however, because in the political debate about the apportionment of “blame,” the argument may ultimately hinge not just on establishing certain instances of U.S. aggressiveness, or even on showing Washington's initiative in the confrontation, but rather on showing the defining U.S. role in every episode of the Cold War's onset. Kofsky sheds particularly valuable light on the interpretation given to the Prague events of February 1948 and on the circumstances leading up to the Berlin blockade later that year.

Kofsky and other left historians show that the approach taken toward the Soviet Union when it was still reeling from the Second World War can now be seen to foreshadow the Reagan administration's "full court press" against the weakened Soviet economy of the 1980s. The intervening period of great-power rivalry appears in retrospect as a temporary and, for Washington, unwelcome interruption of its long-term campaign of attrition.

In addition, however, to the anti-Soviet dimension of U.S. policy, there is another aspect on which Kofsky focuses and which is newer to the Cold War debate. Up to now, the question has turned largely on which side initiated the post Second World War military standoff. The new question raised by Kofsky is whether the war scare—granted now to have originated in Washington—had to be manufactured not only for the sake of anti-Soviet or anticommunist objectives, but also in order to satisfy the profit anxieties of the U.S. arms industry.

While there is obviously no incompatibility between these two goals, it appears from Kofsky's evidence that pressure from the aircraft industry added considerably to the urgency of the government's measures. Some of the most interesting documentation in the book is from the unpublished letters of aircraft company presidents to high government officials. The private executives are absolutely blunt in demanding two things: on the one hand, that their enterprises be subsidized, and on the other, that the word "subsidy" never be uttered in public.

Much of Kofsky's narrative focuses on the interplay between such immediate concerns and the larger strategic considerations of U.S. global leadership. In view of the sheer economic weight of the military sector, there was of course some overlap between these two perspectives. But there were also differences, which partially surfaced in the form of tension between the State Department and the Defense Department over the degree of aggressiveness to be projected in official declarations.

Kofsky's judicious blend of narrative and commentary enables us to see such differences within the larger framework of a common class interest. In this sense, his book constitutes a case study whose significance extends beyond the immediate subject matter of 1948. Its overarching theme is the intricacies of management of the U.S. imperial edifice. Methodologically, the study embodies a persuasive synthesis of structural and investigative approaches. Since so much of popular awareness rests on theoretically ill-grounded investigative descriptions, it is refreshing to find a work that instructs while it exposes.

The exposure aspect, however, raises at some points the specter of "conspiracy theory." Kofsky confronts this epithet head-on in an appended essay in which he allows the documentary evidence to speak for itself. At the same time, he reassures us that while conspiracies may arise in fact, it is not they alone that constitute the subject matter of theory. Where state power is concerned, the key concept remains that of class. As he puts it (p. 308), "One of the things we most need to understand—and one of the things historians most often fail to discuss—are the precise means by which the dominant class and those who serve it go about accomplishing their goals in politics."

NOTES

1. Washington's role as an instigator of this process could be documented as early as 1952 on the basis of already published memoirs and diaries of high U.S. officials. See Carl Marzani, *We Can Be Friends* (New York: Topical Books, 1952; reissued, Garland Publishing: New York, 1971).
2. Among the works of the 1960s, perhaps the most important is Gar Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1965; expanded edition New York: Penguin, 1985). While Marzani concluded in *We Can Be Friends* that the A-bombing of Japan was directed principally against the extension of Soviet influence, Alperovitz's work, which is now being further updated, adds importantly to the documentation and context of the decision, and is currently a major reference-point in public debates over the 50th anniversary commemoration of the bombing. See his essay, "Hiroshima: Historical Cleansing," *In These Times*, 20 February 1995, pp. 18-21.

Howard J. Sherman

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(Continued from inside front cover)

they know it isn't popular and for the most part keep quiet about it. Recently, however, certain conservative pundits decided it would be a good idea to go on the offensive, mounting a rather elaborate effort to "prove" that increasing inequality is nothing but a statistical illusion. But this was too much for mainstream economists, some of whom have contributed important studies to the very real trend to greater inequality. In recent months, the *New York Times* has run op-ed pieces by two of their most prestigious professors, Thurow of M.I.T. and Krugman of Stanford, exposing this right-wing fraud and affirming in no uncertain terms both the existence and seriousness of the trend to increasing inequality.

Thoughtful people of all ideological persuasions have always known that extreme inequality is a danger to society. Beyond a certain point a widening gap between the fortunate few and the downtrodden many sets the stage for what may best be called a latent civil war that can always explode (or implode) into open warfare with disastrous consequences for everyone concerned. This may well have been what Steven Rattner, a managing director at the New York investment banking house of Lazard Freres & Co., had in mind when he wrote in a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed piece (May 23, 1993):

"Having detailed America's ills at seemingly endless lengths and having taken considerable initiative in proposing explicit solutions, the Republicans have nonetheless left unmentioned perhaps the greatest evident threat to America's well-being: income inequality.

"Nowhere in 157 pages of 'quotations from Speaker Newt' is the problem mentioned. Nowhere in the ten-point Contract With America was a solution proposed. Nowhere in the House and Senate budget proposals is the issue addressed.

"And yet income inequality has worsened dramatically over the past twenty years, and now stands at its greatest level since records have been kept. Among industrialized nations, America has the greatest division between rich and poor (and the greatest degree of deterioration over the past two decades).

"More attention is needed. Growing inequality—particularly when combined with flat average wages—heightens social tensions as workers perceive that getting more has become a zero-sum game. From anti-immigration sentiment to anti-incumbent voting, income inequality explains why, with the economy so good, so many people feel so bad."

It seems obvious from this last sentence that Mr. Rattner does not believe that increasing inequality is bad for the economy. Like many other analysts, probably including most economists these days, he more likely believes the opposite, i.e., that growing inequality actually improves the functioning of a capitalist economy. The reasoning here is all too familiar: (1) what ails the U.S. economy is a chronic shortage of investment; (2) investment depends on saving; (3) relative to their respective incomes the rich are savers, the poor consumers; (4) therefore shifting income from the poor to the rich—increasing the degree of inequality—should make the economy work better.

(Continued on page 52)

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